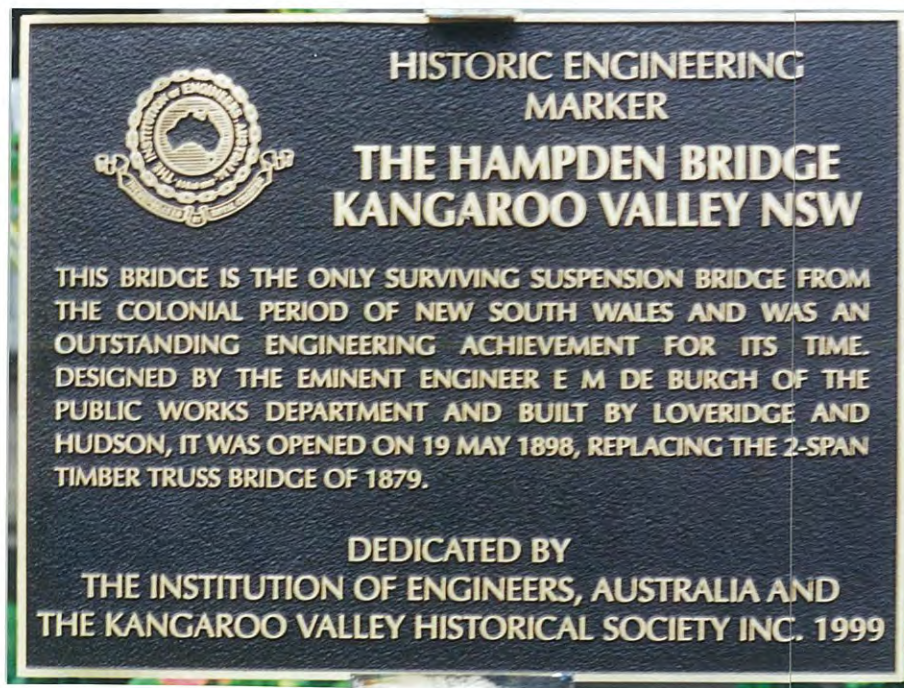


CEREMONY REPORT

FOR PLAQUING

The Hampden Bridge

OVER THE KANGAROO RIVER,
KANGAROO VALLEY, N S W.
31 OCTOBER, 1999



Prepared by
Donald J Fraser, November 1999

THE CEREMONY

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2 pm | Peta Seaton MP, Patron of KVHS. |
| 2.05 | Greg Watson, Mayor, Shoalhaven C C. |
| 2.10 | Tony Arts, R T A Wollongong. |
| 2.30 | Ian Pedersen, National President, I E Aust. |
- Declaration and unveiling.
- Photographs.
- Refreshments for official guests.

Ernest McCartney DeBurgh (1863 - 1929)



He was born in Dublin on 18 January 1863 and was educated at Rathmines School and then gained his engineering degree from the Royal College of Science.

On 30 April 1885 he joined the NSW Dept. of Public Works as a surveyor then two years later was on bridge construction. In 1891 he became Supervising Bridge Engineer and was Engineer for Bridges 1901-03. He was involved in the design of many historical bridges in NSW and developed a composite steel and timber truss which bears his name.

He transferred to the Rivers and Water Supply Branch and was sent overseas to study dam construction. On his return he designed Cataract and Burrenjack Dams and others to 1925.

He twice won the Telford Prize (ICE, London) and was regarded as one of the ablest civil engineers in Australia.

Kangaroo Valley Historical Society Inc.

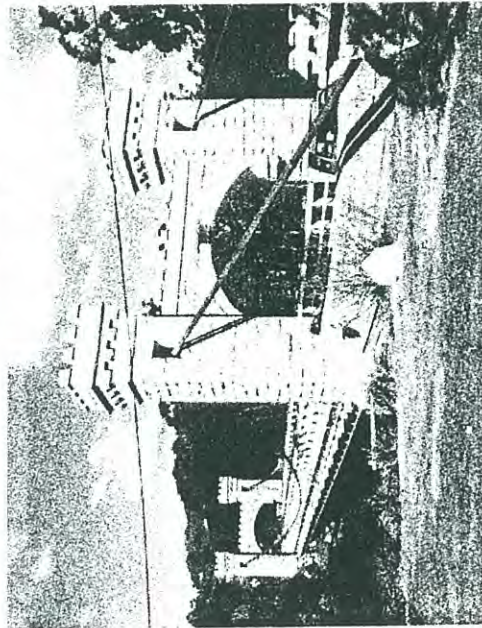
AND

The Institution of Engineers, Australia

WILL UNVEIL A PLAQUE
DECLARING

The Hampden Bridge

OVER THE KANGAROO RIVER,
KANGAROO VALLEY, N S W.



TO BE AN

Historic Engineering Marker

AT THE BRIDGE SITE ON

SUNDAY 31 OCTOBER, 1999, 2 pm.

THE HAMPDEN BRIDGE STORY

by Alan Clark and Don Fraser

Kangaroo Valley is one of a number of outlying parts of the Shoalhaven City Council area which boasts a proud history, and for the past century, the Hampden Bridge has been its most significant feature.

Motorists who must pause before crossing it, have a chance to appreciate its grandeur and reflect on the large project which was started in 1896 and opened to traffic two years later.

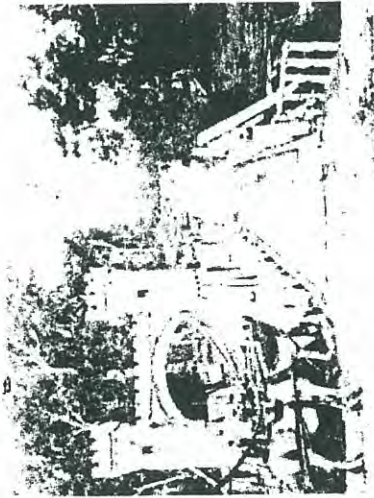
The close-knit community was well aware of the bridge's centenary and organised a full day of celebrations on 25 May 1998, which included rededication of the bridge by Carl Scully, Minister for Roads and concluded with fireworks.

A commemorative plaque was placed on the granite block at the Moss Vale side of the bridge and will be joined by the Institution of Engineer's plaque.

The first bridge

Early settlers were hampered in their travels from the coast to the Southern Highlands by having to ford the Kangaroo River, often fast flowing in its deep gorge. The Public Works Department let a contract in February 1877 to the Braidwood company, Kelly & Walsh, to build a 2-span timber truss bridge for 3,000 pounds.

The original site proved to be unsuitable and caused construction difficulties so a new site was chosen and, named the Kangaroo Valley Bridge, it was opened on 14 August 1879 by Thomas Garrett MP for Camden before a cheering crowd of 200 people.



The conclusion that it was "a thoroughly permanent structure" was short lived, because by 1893 there was extensive deterioration of the timber, wire ropes and two large girders were placed under trusses to increase their strength. Also there was the ever present threat of a flood taking out the pier in the middle of the river. A clear span bridge was required, only a large steel truss or a suspension bridge were the only options at the time.

The new bridge

Public Works Department engineer, Ernest DeBurgh, visited the site on 21 April 1895 to take levels and other data prior to drawing up plans for a new bridge. A year later *The Kangaroo Valley Times* published a full description of the proposed suspension bridge.

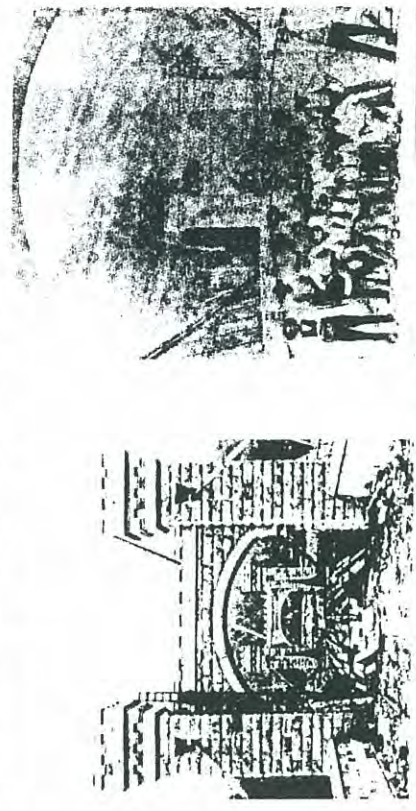
The first milestone was the laying of the keystone in the archway of the Nowra side tower by Florence Comer on 30 May 1896. The Sydney based stone masonry company Loveridge and Hudson were the principal contractors. They had an impressive record with significant stone buildings in Sydney. Thomas Loveridge was supervising the trachyte quarry at Bowral and made regular visits to the bridge site to check progress and give advice. DeBurgh visited the site in July 1896.

Later that month the four 6-ton stone anchor blocks arrived and some of the steel cables, imported from England, arrived via the Cambewarra Mountain road.

In September, the local newspaper reported on progress. The masonry tower would be completed in three months and then erecting the cables would commence. This occurred in July 1897 from reels situated on the Moss Vale side. Manila rope was first drawn across the river by a winch, attached to a steel rope which was then drawn across over the saddles on top of the towers and finally anchored off in the anchor chambers.

Work continued of completing and adjusting the main cables, attaching the hangers, the cross girders, the stiffening trusses and the deck such that on 2 February 1898, the bridge was opened to vehicular traffic. Ten days later the flood resulting from heavy rain, carried the old bridge away.

The official opening of this magnificent bridge was performed by Minister for Works, James Henry Young MP, on 19 May 1898 accompanied by Robert R P Hickson, Engineer-in-Chief, Public Works Department, and the bridge designer Ernest DeBurgh, before a crowd of 400 people. It was named Hampden Bridge, as was the 1895 timber truss bridge at Wagga Wagga, after the Governor, Viscount Hampden, and had been completed at a cost of 8,382 pounds.



Hampden Bridge construction and the work team.

SUMMARY

Despite threatening skies, the rain held off and a successful outdoor ceremony was completed.

The historic setting of the Pioneer Farm, adjacent the bridge, complimented the historic nature of the occasion.

The local Lions Club had a sausage sizzle set up and many visitors availed themselves while others used the park lands for picnic lunches.

A handy number of attendees was present, locally and from further afield. Among those from Sydney were the following members of the Institution of Engineers, Australia,

Charles & Mrs Agnew, President, Sydney Division
Richard Phillips, Director, Sydney Division
Don Cottee, Chairman, Engineering Heritage Committee
Ian & Ann Arthur, Engineering Heritage Committee
Frank & Rosemary Brady, Engineering Heritage Committee
Jon Breen, Engineering Heritage Committee
Ian Bowie, Engineering Heritage Committee
Michael Clarke, Engineering Heritage Committee
Don & Faith Fraser, Engineering Heritage Committee
Ken Wyatt, Engineering Heritage Committee

from Canberra there were
Ian Pedersen, National President
Bob Harvey, Convenor, National Plaquing Sub-Committee
Rob Breen, Member, National Plaquing Sub-Committee

Special guests were
Peta Seaton MP, Member for Southern Highlands
Greg Watson, Mayor, Shoalhaven City Council
Tony Arts, R T A Wollongong
Reece McDougall, Assistant Director, NSW Heritage Office
Roger Strange, RTA Wollongong, who had been maintaining the Hampden Bridge in good order for some 30 years.

The following sponsors are gratefully acknowledged
Dairy Farmers, Kangaroo Valley
The Kangaroo Valley Lions Club

Thanks to the ladies in their turn-of-the-century dresses for the splendid afternoon tea and to the Scots College Pipe Band who entertained the visitors prior to the ceremony.

Win Palmer, Secretary, Kangaroo Valley Historical Society. Inc.
Don Fraser, Secretary, Engineering Heritage Committee, I E Aust.
Bruce Preston, President, Kangaroo Valley Lions Club and M.C. for the ceremony.



Top: The venue for the ceremony.
Below: A group from the Scots College Pipe Band.



Top: Edwardian ladies.
Below: Part of the attendees.



Peta Seaton, MP, Patron of the Kangaroo
Valley Historical Society. Inc.



Greg Watson, Mayor,
Shoalhaven City Council



Left: M.C. Bruce Preston, President, Kangaroo Valley Lions Club
Right: Tony Arts, Roads and Traffic Authority, Wollongong.



Ian Pedersen, National President, Institution of Engineers, Australia,
who declared the Hampden Bridge to be an
Historic Engineering Marker.



Unveiling the plaque, l to r, Ian Pedersen, Greg Watson, Peta Seaton and Tony Arts.
Sponsor's banner draped the plaque and I E Aust banner was the backdrop.



An excellent afternoon tea by the Kangaroo Valley Historical Society was enjoyed by all.